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We Do Not Like to Say Goodbye.
We'll Now Have to Say Goodbye.

***Paine Publishing Co., Dayton, Ohio***

# Miss Janie; *or,* The Curtailed Courtship

*A Comedy-Drama*

*By* MARY BONHAM

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PAINE PUBLISHING COMPANY
DAYTON, OHIO

PS635
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## CHARACTERS

MRS. REBECCA WING, whose husband is lost
JANIE WING, her daughter
MISS KATE WING, the unforgiving
SILAS MEND, a chair mender
MR. RICHARD BLONDO, a land agent wanting a wife
MR. ROBERT RICHO, owner of an alligator ranch
MRS. SARA PINES, friend of Miss Kate's
ROSE VINES, Janie's schoolmate
HANDY HEAP, colored servant
MANDY MAIN, colored servant
REV. DEAN, the minister
TOMPSON, the cat

As ROSE appears only in the first act and MANDY in the second, third, and fourth, ROSE may play the role of MANDY.

### DIRECTIONS

R—right of stage to the actor: L—left; F—front; R—rear; C—center.

### COSTUMES

Modern. SILAS MEND wears mustache and goatee in Act III, dress suit in IV and is clean shaven.

TIME OF PLAYING—About one and one-half hours.

OCT 24 '22
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# Miss Janie; or, The Curtailed Courtship

## ACT I.

### SCENE

JANIE'S room in college, door on R. Table and two chairs near C. Looking glass on wall. Trunk or closet, L. JANIE seated at table, elbows on table with chin in hands, facing audience, kodak album on lap or table. Knock at door.

JANIE: Do come in! I'm as lonesome as the last rose of summer!

ROSE [*entering*]: Well I'm that rose, then. I'm glad to see, however, that I'm not the only one left blooming alone! Janie, it's a shame to send a girl three thousand miles from home to college!

JANIE: I'll say it's *tragic!* Rose, why did your parents send you from the Pacific to the Atlantic to college anyway?

ROSE: Father and mother have an idea that the eastern colleges are better than our western ones, and then, too, some of their ancesters were reared in the east, crossed the Delaware with Washington, and otherwise climbed the ladder of fame, and for that reason I had to breathe some of this eastern atmosphere which makes heroes—

JANIE: Rose, didn't you make a grammatical error in gender as Prof. English would say?

ROSE: No, child, I used heroes, purposely. I never expect to do daring deeds. I leave that to you Easterners. "Janie Wing, Heroine," would look well on a movie screen.

JANIE: Hush. Rose Vines, I'll never be a heroine for I can prove it.

ROSE: I won't believe you until you do.

JANIE: I haven't practiced my music today, I hate music, therefore according to the greatest poet, Shakespeare, I'm "fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils." No heroine in that.

ROSE: Pretty good reasoning, but that fits only today. Anyone hates to practice music on a holiday. I expect to hear from you some day.

JANIE: But, Rose, I'm *mischief* bent today. I'm bound to play a joke on somebody. I'm willing to do and dare! [*Rises and throws herself back as if about to strike someone, then sits.*] But there's nothing to dare,—everybody gone but us lonesome roses.

ROSE: There's the lady principal.

JANIE: Gracious! She can't take a joke. She'd expel me if I tied a paper to a cat's tail.

ROSE: Say, Janie, why didn't you go home this Easter? You don't live but twenty miles from here.

JANIE: Simply because mother and Aunt Jane have gone on a pleasure trip themselves and ordered me to remain subject to the lady principal.

ROSE: I'm convinced that our parents are inconsiderate of their daughters' pleasures.

JANIE: Rose, there's mischief in the air. I smell it. [*Shakes fists.*]

ROSE: O thou fighting spirit, get into the shadows. Peace is the order of the day. Say, tell me about these pictures.

JANIE [*sitting*]: As there's nothing to dare I might as well revel in the bravery of my ancesters.

ROSE: Who are the three G's,—G. G. G?

JANIE: They are my great, great, great, grandparents. They fought the British in '76.

ROSE: You made a grammatical error in number, my dear.

JANIE: Oh, no, I used *they* purposely.

ROSE: Your great, great, great, *grandmother* did not fight, did she?

JANIE: Yes, indeed! She fought the battle for food and protection for fourteen children during the Revolution. Once an Indian stole one of the fourteen and, don't you know, she dressed up like an Indian squaw, fooled every Indian in the wigwam and rescued the lost lamb!

ROSE: Goodness, that's more than crossing the Delaware!

JANIE: And that's why I pasted this laurel above her picture. The next are the two G's—my great, great, grandparents. They fought in the war of 1812. This is my grandfather who lived in South Carolina and was a leader in the war of Secession. He rode with Lee to the end and never got a scratch though many a Yankee bullet whizzed near him.

ROSE: Gracious! Maybe my grandfather fired some of those bullets. Let's see. Who's next? I'd guess it is your father. He's dead, isn't he?

JANIE: I don't think he's dead, but he's lost.

ROSE: When, where, and how, Janie?

JANIE: Ten years ago he went to seek gold in Alaska. We have never heard of him since. Mother thinks he is dead.

ROSE: Well, I certainly *hope* he's not. [*Looking at picture.*] Janie Wing! this picture is you, fifty years hence.

JANIE: That's Aunt Kate, father's sister, who lives with us.

ROSE: She wear's a wig, doesn't she? Is she a widow?

JANIE: No, she's an unforgiving spinster.

ROSE: Janie, I'm going to get that gray wig I had in the play and put it on you to show you that you are the very "spittin' image" of your auntie. [*Exit.*]

JANIE: I don't feel complimented but if I can get some fun out of dressing up like her—oh, I have an idea. Rosebud, run here and blossom out in the sunshine of fun.

ROSE [*entering with wig*]: I'm in full bloom, my dear.

JANIE: I'm going to dress up like Aunt Kate and call on her friend, Mrs. Sara Pines, who lives in town!

ROSE: Gracious! Something daring in that! You are like your three G grandmother. I knew you had a fertile brain, Janie Wing.

JANIE: As well as a very sensitive olfactory nerve. Didn't I tell you I smelt mischief!

ROSE: Well, I'm in for anything.

JANIE: Rose, you will have to help me cross the Delaware. You're descended from the Delaware heroes. How am I to get by the lady principal?

ROSE: Easy, she's out. Here's the wig.

JANIE: That's the main article. Put it on me, Rose, I must have a peep. [*Looks in glass.*] It's a sure hit, Rose. Now I'll put on an old black dress we had in the play while you forage for a fan. Aunt Kate always carries a fan when she calls, and you know I might want to suppress a laugh behind it.

ROSE: Janie, there is a sea of fun rolling at your feet. I wish I could go with you! Oh for a fan, a fan, my kingdom for a fan! Shakespeare said "The play's the thing," but I say the fan's the thing. [*Exits.* JANIE *puts on dress, old pin, and some lace about neck. Wig hair must be gray and pulled flat over ears in rather old style.* AUNT KATE *must be genteel but somewhat antique.* ROSE *enters with a large black fan.*]

JANIE: Rose, you are my fairy queen. I only wish, and gracious! I've got to have nose glasses. Aunt Kate never calls without them. I fear our much laid plan is undone, Rosey!

ROSE: No. This joke's too good to spoil. Miss Jones wears them, but it's like boarding a lioness in her den to approach her.

JANIE: Didn't you tell me your ancestors crossed the Delaware a stormy winter night.

ROSE: I'm gone for glasses!

JANIE: Maybe I'd better put on a few time tracks. [*Marks lines on face with pencil.*] It'd never do to be recognized. Gee! I forgot I had to have a black poke hat to wear. Aunt Kate isn't so easy to ape after all. [*Pulls out white hat and tries to shape it like a poke.*]

ROSE: "Honest confession is good for the soul." I told Miss Jones you were dressing up like your aunt who wears nose glasses to have your picture made and she said you might have the glasses if you'd give her a picture. Now you go to the photographer and have some maps made or I'll never joke again!

JANIE: Rose, that is a dandy idea. It adds fuel to my flame of fun. But listen, another Delaware of trouble. My poke is not black and Aunt Kate always calls in a black poke and veil.

ROSE: Where's the shoe polish? [JANIE *hands polish to* ROSE *who blacks hat while* JANIE *pulls out some trimming, plume or purple flowers to put on hat.*]

JANIE: It's not so bad after all to be deserted. I believe it is good for girls to be thrown on their own resources. [*Places veil over face.*]

ROSE: This will be a valuable experience for us, I'm thinking.

JANIE: Now with my velvet coat I think I'll be Aunt Kate, ditto. [*Dons coat.*]

ROSE: Will you call or pose first?

JANIE: I'll pose first as that will help me hold my composure. This way. [*Sits as if ready for a picture.*] And when I greet my friend I'll kiss her in her dimple. Aunt Kate told me how she kissed Mrs. Pines' dimple so I mustn't make a mistake. Wish me luck, Rosebud.

ROSE [*holds glass of water up*]: Here's to Janie Wing, Chief of Fungetters, an ocean of fun! [*Spills water.*]

JANIE: Prepare for my return, Rose, for I'll have a tale to unfold. [*Exit.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II

Parlor. JANIE sitting near MRS. PINES, holding hands.

MRS. PINES: Kate, I'm so glad to see you looking so young and fresh. I believe you have found the fountain of youth.

JANIE: Oh no, Sara dear, I attribute my freshness to the eating of three raw eggs a day. Then one is inclined to grow fleshy as one grows older.

MRS. PINES: Do tell me about Rebecca and Janie. Of course Janie is at home for the Easter season.

JANIE: No, Janie did not come home as Rebecca and I went to New York for a little visit. Rebecca thinks it not the best to allow much home-going to a college girl. I'm old fashioned enough to think that the girls now are inferior to the girls of our day.

MRS. PINES: Now Kate, I do want to be very confidential and learn the truth of some reports I heard.

JANIE: Certainly, Sara, you and I always shared our secrets.

MRS. PINES: They tell me that Mr. Richo is a frequent visitor in your home again. Are you and he warming up the soup after twenty years?

JANIE [*coughs behind fan*]: No, Sara, Robert and I are still unreconciled. You know he would not give up his alligator farm and I always said I'd not marry him 'till he did.

MRS. PINES: Could it be possible that he is going to see Rebecca with matrimonial intentions?

JANIE [*confused*]: Er, ah, my dear friend, Rebecca doesn't tell me a thing,—about Mr. Richo, Robert I mean.

MRS. PINES: I understand that Rebecca allows herself to be called a widow now?

JANIE: Well, she believes that fa-er-John is not alive after ten years of silence. Now I don't know that she encourages him.

MRS. PINES: Well, I heard that she did not encourage him as much as she does that Mr. Blondo, a land agent, recently come into the neighborhood. But you know more about it than I do. When is the wedding to be?

JANIE [*smells salts*]: Dearest Sara, don't ask me. Rebecca tells me so little since I'm not in favor of the match. [*Sighs behind fan.*]

MRS. PINES: Maybe it will be a good thing for Rebecca. She needs some man to run her farm and then too, they tell me that Janie is getting quite out from under her mother's thumb,—wild as a march hare I heard.

JANIE: Now Mrs.—my dear Sara, don't believe everything Madam Rumor says. [*Knock at door.* MRS. PINES *opens door and* MISS KATE *throws her arms around* MRS. PINES *and kisses her.*]

MISS KATE: Dear Sara, I got tired of New York,—too many folks to suit me, and while Rebecca was visiting an

old school mate I decided I'd see mine. Why-er-Sara, what's the matter. Don't you know me?

MRS. PINES: Er-ah-I, I don't understand. Here is Kate. [*Points to* JANIE.]

MISS KATE: Sara Pines, you are losing your mind! This woman is not I, Kate Wing.

MRS. PINES: She is your double then for she acts just like you do; she knows the family news, holds her fan like you do, and kissed me in your dimple.

MISS KATE: Sara, you are stark crazy, I do believe, though I'll test you a little. What news of the family did she relate?

MRS. PINES: She said she and Mr. Richo were still unreconciled and she did not deny that Rebecca was receiving suitors.

MISS KATE: That sounds sane. You say the hussy kissed you in my dimple?

MRS. PINES: Yes, in your dimple, here.

MISS KATE: Oh, Sara, I reckon we are both losing our minds.

MRS. PINES: Oh, I don't know which is my sweet friend!

MISS KATE: And I don't know which is I. Some one phone for the doctor. [*Drops.*]

MRS. PINES: No, I don't want this to be known. Kate she is so still she must be a ghost.

MISS KATE: I know she is an imposter, an invader, a trespasser.

MRS. PINES: She is like the beggar ghosts in Hiawatha's home before Minnehaha died. Something's going to happen.

JANIE: Yes I am a spirit, and something awful is going to happen.

MRS. PINES: O Kate, I told you so. O-o-o-o-o-o-o-o.

MISS KATE: Yes, Sara, I know you did. O-o-o-o-o-o o o. We'll both die together. [*Clasp arms about each other and wail.*]

JANIE [*pulls off veil on face*]: Mrs. Pines, Aunt Kate, I beg your forgiveness. I'm nobody but Janie Wing,—wicked thing—who has made a fool of herself.

MISS KATE: You put yourself in the positive degree. Explain your infamous conduct!

JANIE: I will. This afternoon I was out of something to do; the lady principal was out, and all the girls were out except one who said I was the image of you, Aunt Jane. She proved it with this wig and I decided I'd call on Mrs. Pines for fun. Do have mercy on me!

MRS. PINES: Well, now, I do declare, that was a good joke on me. And you were so clever I never detected—

MISS KATE: Sara Pines, you may forgive and forget this, but I never will. The act is unpardonable. Think of the scene just enacted. Miss, you spoiled my visit so I'll spoil yours. March! Sara, I will never venture out again. Farewell!

## ACT II

### SCENE

MRS. WING'S porch, hammock, chairs or benches, books and papers. JANIE knitting on scarf, MISS KATE reading, HANDY outside whistling occasionally.

MISS KATE: Now, Miss, every time you put a stitch in that scarf, put one in your gray matter that it is a sin to mock your superiors.

JANIE: Aunt Kate, if I get the two thousand rounds done before mother returns from New York, may I have a row on the pond?

MISS KATE: No! I'll unravel, and you will re-knit till she comes back. I can't trust you out of sight. You will follow me precisely.

JANIE: O sweet Auntie, you'll make a monkey out of me won't you!

MISS KATE: You are monkey enough in some respects! [*Gets paper and reads.*]

JANIE [*gets paper and reads*]: Oh sweet Auntie, my name's in this.

MISS KATE: Don't sweeten me. [*Pulls out two rows of* JANIE'S *knitting.*] Now make up your lost time.

JANIE: Auntie, I thought if I did like you I'd do properly.

MISS KATE: Do as I say!

JANIE: May I ask you a question, Aunt Kate?

MISS KATE: If it's to the point and void of foolishness.

JANIE: Did you ever forgive Mr. Richo for bringing you that little alligator from his ranch in Florida?

MISS KATE: No, and never will.

JANIE: His joke was not as bad as mine, was it?

MISS KATE: You mean that his *downfall* was not as bad as yours! No, for yours was the limit.

JANIE: Aunt Kate, every joke on you has a Falls, hasn't it?

MISS KATE: Yes, and I usually make it a Niagara Falls, too.

JANIE: Well, if Mr. Richo's Fall was a Niagara, which meant the loss of you for a better half, mine is—

MISS KATE: The loss of my fortune. I re-wrote my will today and your name was left out.

JANIE: I heard of people rolling over Niagara Falls in a barrel and not getting hurt one iota?

MISS KATE: May be so, but when your mother marries that Blondo you will find that there are rapids below that make rough sailing.

JANIE: Excuse me, Auntie, for not taking this as a new idea.

MISS KATE: I did not approve of this match till I discovered what an unruly daughter there is in the home.

JANIE: It would be awful for the world to have another Enoch Arden.

MISS KATE: Don't mix fact and fiction. You may look like me but you don't think like I do.

JANIE: Providence was wise.

MISS KATE: What do you mean?

JANIE: Well, suppose a handsome fellow—

MISS KATE: Fellow,—how vulgar!

JANIE: Suppose a handsome gentleman was on his knees to you for a *yes* that he was going to get and I thought just like you did, why I might be tempted to cut you out—.

MISS KATE: Will you please remember that I deal in *facts,* not *fiction!* I can not enjoy the company of a spinner of fiction. You will remain seated. [*Exit R.*]

JANIE: Gracious, what a change in the atmosphere! [*Takes long breath.*]

HANDY [*outside sings to tune of Polly Wolly Doodle*]:

Behind de barn down on my knees,—
Singing Polly Wolly Doodle all de day—
Thought I heard a chicken sneeze—[*Changes tune.*]
Way down upon de Swanee ribber—
Far, far away—
Dar's whar my heart is turnin' ebber—

JANIE: Why Handy, are you dealing in a flight of imagination or have you a girl down on the Swanee?

HANDY: Yassy mum, I'se habin' slight agitation wid dis mowin' machine. Also habin' trouble wid dat gal in de kitchen. She done quit eatin' my candy, Miss Janie, an' I'se turnin' my heart ter a purple Pansy I uster co't on de Swanee.

JANIE: Well, I don't blame you. But why are you working on the lawn mower so early in the season? The grass is not high yet.

HANDY: No'm, but Miss Becky gittin' awful 'ticlar dese days. She done pinted her finger at me an' say, "Handy, don't let a single weed get in de yard dis spring."

JANIE: You have a Doughboy job, then, Handy.

HANDY: Not, 'zactly, Miss Janie, dese are *peace* times. I gwine keep dis yard so smooth you'd 'thunk de razor man has got it for his ad.

JANIE: Handy, do you know when my mother is coming home?

HANDY: No'm, but I spec any minute kase I seed dat beau-love of hers unpowderin' his car in town yistidy.

JANIE: Unpowdering his car,—what's that, Handy?

HANDY: Rubbin' de chamois skin on ter git de dust off. [JANIE *laughs.*]

JANIE: I see. Well who is this man, Handy?

HANDY: You ough ter come home 'fo' now ter see de gwine-on. Ain't you know you mos' got a paw-in-law?

JANIE: O murder, tell me about him quick!

HANDY: Looks like 'tain't my place ter tell you what yo' maw hain't tell you. I lowed you'd come home ter he'p tie de weddin' bow on 'em.

JANIE: Gee! I've come home to untie the wedding bow. Do tell me about the unfortunate *he*.

HANDY: 'Tain't nobody but a ole land agent, name Blondo. Co'ted every gal in de county till he's bald as a onion. I'se at de barber's an' seed him pull off his wiggin. Done tore up all de good roads in de country tryin' ter find him a rich wife wid a farm. I gwine hand in my papers when he comes here, an' go down ter de Swanee.

JANIE: You really think mother will marry this fellow?

HANDY: Yas'm, knows it! Done pursented de argument gin de case, made her mad, an' when she cool off she like wagon tire, squeeze on all de tighter. I'd thunk Miss Becky'd turn up her nose at dat chap like white hen do at a woolly worm.

JANIE: Handy, we *must break up* this match. My father may be alive and if he is not I do not want this Blondo for a—

HANDY: You'se got sense, Miss Janie, but meddlin' in love is throwin' rocks in bumble-bees' nest.

JANIE: I always did like to make a raid on a bumble-bees' nest. Handy, will you help me tear up this one?

HANDY: Yas'sy mum, pervided you will help me tame dat hornet in de kitchen.

JANIE: It's a bargain. I am ready to make and to break matches. Skidoo! I hear some one coming. [HANDY *runs out L as* MISS KATE *enters R.*]

MISS KATE: I thought I heard voices. [*Looks about.*] Were you talking to yourself?

HANDY [*outside sings*]:

I went ter bed but it was no use,—
Singing Polly Wolly Doodle all de day—
My feet stuck out fer a chicken roost—
Singing Polly Wolly Doodle all de day.

[MISS KATE *looks mad.*]

MISS KATE: Or have you condescended to converse with the servant?

JANIE: I was not plotting any more jokes, Auntie.

MISS KATE: I should think you'd be plotting how to explain your disgrace to your mother and—

*Enter* REBECCA *and* BLONDO.

REBECCA: Why is Janie at home, Kate? I do not understand.

MISS KATE: Rebecca, Janie has disgraced the Wing family. The last generation is dwindling. The brave spirit of the Wings has faded to a mere shadow.

REBECCA: Do tell me what has happened, Kate.

MISS KATE: Your daughter has been expelled from college for *mockery!* She had the audacity to dress up like me and call on my friend, Sara Pines. When I arrived, there sat the monkey posing as I. She actually had Sara believing that she was I. As good luck would have it, I walked in at that moment. There she stood, still as the Sphinx, till Sara and I both decided we were insane. Then like a bubble she burst, and begged for mercy. [*Drops on seat.*] Oh! I'll never get over the shock, mentally, physically or spiritually!

REBECCA: Janie, I am ashamed of you.

JANIE: Mother, I'm doing a punishment of two thousand rows on a scarf, besides cut out of Aunt Kate's will.

MISS KATE: I immediately took the ape to the lady principal who immediately expelled her. I brought her home yesterday and set her in the straight and narrow path.

REBECCA: Janie, what made you do it! It may get in the papers.

BLONDO: Yes, my dear, since you mention it, I saw an account of the episode in the Morning Times. I did not

tell you for I knew how it would hurt. You need a masculine arm in such a time as this. Come, let's take a spin for some refreshing air.

MISS KATE: Yes, Rebecca, you speed for some air and consolation. I'll keep watch till the strong arm is ready to take the reins. [*Sits as* REBECCA *and* BLONDO *go out at R.*] [KATE *glances at book but gets sleepy*:]

JANIE: I'll not run away, Aunt Kate, if you wish to take your afternoon nap. I'll sit here and curb the spirit of my ancestors.

MISS KATE: How dare you mention your ancestors! I should think it would make their bones colder.

HANDY [*outside*]: Golly, ooo-o-o-o-o-o-o- I'd hate ter see dem bones shiverin'!

MISS KATE: Handy Heap, do hush your nonsense and go to the rear.

HANDY: I'se awful busy, Missus, whettin' dis yard-razor. Got order ter slick her up fer de new man-in-law. [*Sings.*]

> I went ter see my gal one night—
> Singing Polly, etc.
> She sed I wus a awful sight,
> Singing—

MISS KATE: Who could read with so much vulgarity in the air? I tell you for *the last time*, Handy, to go to the rear.

HANDY: What Missus, you ain't gwine die, is you?

MISS KATE [*going out door L.*]: Move, this minute.

HANDY [*pulls mower across porch after* MISS KATE *sits*]: I allus obeys de word of mouf. Missus. [JANIE *whispers to* HANDY *to get her off the porch.*]

MISS KATE: You imp of Africa, why didn't you go the back way?

HANDY: Lowed you wanted me ter go de straight and narrow paf whar you tole Miss Janie ter go. Ain't dat Bible?

MISS KATE: You are another that needs a masculine arm. Get back, sir. [HANDY *whistles back out L.*]

JANIE: I'm getting awfully tired of these two thousand rows, Auntie. Won't you let me gather you a bouquet of spring violets? Mr. Richo might drop in.

MISS KATE: Keep the spigot of your imagination turned off in my presence. Remain seated, but don't refer again to the man who has alligators for a hobby.

HANDY [*at L*]: De sun's done set fer yo' ole cat, Miss Kitty. Don't you hear him squallin' in de bottom of de well? [*Cat cries outside.*]

MISS KATE: Oh-oh-oh! Run Janie, help rescue the perishing! Oh, my poor, dear, Tompson! [*Runs out L.*]

JANIE [*grabs sofa pillow*]: All right, Auntie, I'll throw this pillow down for him to sit on, while Handy gets a basket to draw him up in. [*Exit L.*]

MANDY [*enters on R.*]: I don't keer if de ole cat is in de well. Allus pesticatin' in de kitchen, in de gravy specially; done got fat on stole chicken livers. Spec de cold water feel goot ter him atter dat scaldin'. I hope he die fo' dey fishes him out. Some say hit's bad luck ter kill a cat,—huh hit's wuss ter have'em on de table all de time! Co'se Miss Katie'll go-in mou'nin' fer him an' blame me, but, shucks; I let somebody else shake de tree ob trouble. I'd ruther set [*sits*] an' rock, an' eat candy, an' sing. [*Tune* POLLY WOLLY.]

I got secret I ain't gwine tell,
Singing Polly, etc.
I soon will ring my weddin' bell—

HANDY [*at L. door*]: Hush, honey. How you kotch nuther fellow so quick?

MANDY: 'Tain't no consarn you'rn how I kotched him.

HANDY: I see he kotched you on gum-draps. [*Grabs one, scuffle.*] Can't eat dat stuff. Smells like pisin liquor. [*Spits.*]

MANDY: Gum draps is better'n nigger-blood choc'late draps! I'se gwine eat ice cream wid him soon.

HANDY: Spec you'll wish you's eatin' co'nbread wid me some day. [*Whistles.*]

MANDY: You gwine lose yo' specs, Handy Heap. Hope you didn't fish out de ole cat

HANDY: Shucks, you done drown yo' hope. Dat cat's plum happy. Miss Kate curryin' an' vaporatin' him in yo' kitchen. She's reg'lar Red Cross nuss fer cats,—done put cotton an' bandage on him—

MANDY: Yi-hi, nigger, she git you fer throwin' her Tompson in dat well.

HANDY: Ain't I done pull him out?

JANIE [*L*]: Mandy, Aunt Kate wants you.

MANDY: Lawsee! Wisht I could patch on dat fur I scalded off de ole rascal. [*Exit.*]

JANIE: Now, Handy, are you *sure* you will help me get rid of Mr. Blondo?

HANDY: Sure as sunshine, Miss Janie.

JANIE: Talk fast now for Aunt Kate may buzz out any minute. I always heard mother say she could not endure a bald man. Are you sure Mr. Blondo is bald?

HANDY: Bald's a piece of ice. He wears a wiggin or sumpin'.

JANIE: Well, we will remove "the wiggin," as you call it and reveal his baldness to Mother Wing.

HANDY: You got a mountain ter turn ober, Miss Janie.

JANIE: Will you catch me a bumble bee?

HANDY: Yassy mum, kotch a black snake if you want him.

JANIE: I want a bumble bee.

HANDY: You want me ter file his stinger?

JANIE: Yes. Now listen. When mother and Mr. Blondo come, you hang his hat in the hall, and then put some mucilage on the inside of the crown. I will challenge him to a game of croquet, then we'll call for our hats and go for the evening mail. Mother in the meantime will be dressing or looking after the table. When we come back the wig will stick to his hat when he takes it off. You fasten the bee *alive* in the hair of the wig and just before tea is announced, take the wig to him. I think he will be so glad to get it that he will give you a tip. [HANDY *capers.*] Now hustle, lasso a bee, get some glue, watch Aunt Kate, and mind me. [*Exit L.*]

HANDY [*at door*]: But 'sposc I git kotched and caned, Miss Janie?

JANIE: Call on me. I'll be your lawyer.

HANDY: How we gwine lasso dat coon in de kitchen, Miss Janie?

JANIE: One at a time, Handy. I promise that Mandy will eat your chocolates before your mustache is long as a rat's tail. Now motor!

HANDY [*turns somersault on stage*]: Goody! [*Sings, tune Merrily We Roll Along.*]

Gwine ter kotch a bumble bee, bumble bee, bumble bee
Gwine ter kotch a bumble bee, bumble bee, bumble bee.
[*Runs.*]

*Enter* REBECCA *and* BLONDO.

REBECCA: Handy, here a minute. [HANDY *enters, and bows.*] Place Mr. Blondo's hat and gloves inside. Richard, it is so pleasant on the veranda don't you wish to recline in the hammock?

BLONDO: Indeed I do, my ever thoughtful Dear.

REBECCA: You will please excuse me while I see after the servants. [*Enter* JANIE.] You and Janie will have a chance to get acquainted. [*Exit* REBECCA.]

BLONDO: Nothing would please me better. Come, Janie, sit with me in the hammock. [JANIE *sits.*]

JANIE: Mr. Blondo, I hear you have beaten all the girls playing croquet. Would you like to risk a game with me?

BLONDO: Certainly, I shall be delighted. We will be great foes in the game but the best of friends at heart.

JANIE: The sun is low so we will not need our hats.

BLONDO: Oh no. Janie, I hope you will find me not only a "buddy" in croquet but also a dandy dad.

JANIE: Oh, mother, come here a minute. I have an idea. [REBECCA *appears R door.*] Why not bring the tea table out here on the veranda and you and Mr. Blondo have tea where you get the fragrance of flowers and the cooing of doves?

REBECCA: That is a capital idea, Janie love.

JANIE: Mr. Blondo and I are going to try a game of croquet and then we will go for the mail and some flowers for the table. [JANIE *and* BLONDO *rise.*]

REBECCA: Janie, it was so sweet of you to plan it that way.

JANIE [*at R*]: Bye-o, mother, we'll be back in twenty minutes. [*Waves.*]

REBECCA: Handy, Handy, here a minute, please.

HANDY [*out of breath*]: 'Scuse me, fer bein' in a hurry, Miss Becky, but Miss Kate, she skeered Tompson done kotch cold in de well and ordered me ter git some catnip.

REBECCA: Never mind the catnip now, Handy. Bring the tea table out here.

HANDY: Fine place for you and Mr. Man ter eat, fresh air and—Say, Miss Becky, you hain't sed nuthin' 'bout my *close shave.*

REBECCA: Hush, boy, I don't usually notice your shaves.

HANDY: I spee de ole cow'd notice it if she'd come in de yard.

REBECCA: O you rascal, I see; you have done a nice job. It is a close shave.

HANDY: You is righty, but dat ain't de only close shave been on de place ter-day.

REBECCA: Why, what else has happened?

HANDY: Tompson got a close shave wid scaldin' water. I spee Mandy gwine kotch trouble.

MISS KATE [*outside*]: Handy, Handy Heap, bring me that catnip. Tompson needs sleep.

HANDY: 'Scuse me and de table, Miss Becky. On de run, Miss Kitty. [*Exit L.*]

REBECCA: I'm delighted Janie is taking so well to Mr. Blondo. Of course it's bad to be dismissed from college but if her coming home means getting on good terms with her future father it's a good wind. Kate never could appreciate a joke.

HANDY [*L*]: Here de table, Miss Becky. Miss Shoo-fly will hab ter set it.

REBECCA: Who is Miss Shoo-fly?

HANDY: Dat gal in de kitchen. Me and she done busted. She 'vited de spider inter her parlor and shoofliced me.

REBECCA: Well, Handy, Love is blind, and she doesn't see her mistake.

HANDY: Dat's a nail druv wid one lick, Miss Becky. Miss Janie say she hep me knock off de scales.

JANIE [*outside*]: Handy, bring Mr. Blondo's hat and my cap.

BLONDO: Put a feather in Janie's cap, Handy, for she has white-washed me.

HANDY [*at R. Flaps elbows on sides and crows. Aside*]: Don't spec dat de last time she gwine white-wash you, suh. [*Exit R.*]

BLONDO [*coming on porch*]: Rebecca, your daughter is as skillful with a mallet as she is with a joke.

JANIE [*with* BLONDO]: Handy Slow, do come on! [HANDY *breathless with feather.*] What have you been doing?

HANDY: Kotchin' de rooster fer dis fedder. [*Hands* JANIE *cap, with feather.*] I got nudder one fer somebody.

BLONDO: Save that one for me, Handy.

JANIE: Come, Mr. Blondo, we must motor. [*All but* HANDY *go out R.*]

HANDY: Be snow on de orange blossoms when you gits dis fedder. [*Sits and puts feather in own cap or hat.*]

MANDY [*L, turns up nose at* HANDY]: Nigger, whut you got fedder in yo' cap fer? Miss Kate'll rob you dat when I tell her you throw Tompson in de well.

HANDY: You won't hab nary kink when I tell her you scald him. I'se wearin' dis fedder fer de big vic'try.

MANDY: Whut vic'try you talkin' 'bout?

HANDY: De vic'try of marryin' you!

MANDY: Huh! Nudder coon gwine hab dat honor. [*Exit L after setting table for two.*]

HANDY: Oh, gal, I'se as sho ter git you as dis bee is ter git Blondo.

O Mr. Bumble-bee,
I'll put you in de wig
And when de gent's at supper
You mus' dance a whirlijig.

O Mr. Bumble-bee,
Cause dese white folks a break-up
An' den Miss Janie, whoo-pe-dee!
Will hep dese coons ter make-up.

'Tain't gwine be no peace con'frence 'fo' de weddin' bells so I might as well git practiced up. [*Rises and goes through fighting motions.*] Dis de way ter take my foe-beau under de chin. [*Hits.*] Dis way ter fling him. [*Kicks.* MANDY *enters with dishes.*]

MANDY: Whut dat fool caper fer!

HANDY: Practicin' on de big vic'try. [MANDY *grabs his feather, scuffle.*]

MANDY: Gwine gib dis ter my *new* beau.

HANDY: Say, Mandy, you know yo' got *ancestors!* [*Scratches head.*]

MANDY: Hush, 'tain't so. Never had no ancestors. Spec you got 'em.

HANDY [*rolling over and laughing*]: Spec I has, Miss Shoo-fly.

MANDY: I gwine tell Miss Kate ter hand you fine comb.

HANDY: Thanky-do. Say, Shoo-fly, Miss Kate tells me you slumbers in yo' sleep.

MANDY: Shet yo' mouf, 'tain't so. Git off dis porch. [*Throws water on him.*]

HANDY: You want me ter tell Miss Kate you throw water on Tompson, don't you?

MANDY: Huh, dat's all bluff. He skeered ter tell on me. Here comes de folks. [*Exit L. Enter* JANIE *and* BLONDO *who looks at watch.*]

BLONDO: Five minutes ahead of time.

JANIE: Goody! That will give us time to arrange the flowers. You place them on the table, Mr. Blondo, while I put away the hats. [BLONDO, *hands full of flowers, bends for* JANIE *to take his hat.* JANIE *pulls wig off gently with hat and exits.* BLONDO *puts flowers in vase on the table, then selects flower, sits and kisses it.*]

BLONDO: My artistic talent will serve me well today. The widow has such a developed sense of the aesthetic.

HANDY [*bowing low*]: 'Scuse me suh, but didn't you lose dis? [*Shows wig.*]

BLONDO: Scotts! Handy, I surely did. You deserve a dollar for bringing it to me in the nick of time.

HANDY: Thanky-do, suh. I hear de missus comin', so I mus' ski-do. [*Exit L.*] [*Runs into* MANDY *and falls near door. She pours some hot tea on him.*]

MANDY: Dat's whut you gits fer gittin' in my paf.

HANDY: I gwine beat your sweetheart fer dat. [MANDY *places tea, rolls, etc., on table as* MRS. WING *enters R in evening dress.* MANDY *exits L.*]

BLONDO [*advances to meet* REBECCA *and presents flowers*]: A flower for your hair, my dear.

REBECCA: O how lovely [*kissing it, then putting it in hair*], and the centerpiece, isn't it beautiful!!!

BLONDO: You can't guess who arranged it.

REBECCA: Indeed I can. [*Archly.*] You deserve a feather in your cap for that. [*They sit,* REBECCA *pours tea, sip it, take rolls and butter, eat.*]

BLONDO: Rebecca, you make me the happiest man on earth.

REBECCA: Richard, no woman is happier than I.

BLONDO: Sweetheart, I am more than charmed with Janie. She is so full of life and daring, just the kind of girl I admire. Murder! Rebecca, there's something in my hair. [*Grabs head.*]

REBECCA: O what is it, dear? [*Rises.*]

BLONDO: The devil only knows! Get it out, quick. The thing is stinging me.

REBECCA [*trying to look but fears to put hand on* BLONDO'S *head*]: Oh he will sting us both. What can I do, Richard?

BLONDO [*yelling*]: Get the infernal thing out, *out* I say!! Ouch! oh!!!

REBECCA: Handy, Handy, come here, quick! Get the bee out of Mr. Blondo's hair.

HANDY: Must hab smelt de flowers. [*Grabs wig off.*] I done kotch him, massy. Here he am [*showing bee to* BLONDO]. [BLONDO *and* REBECCA *drop in chairs.* REBECCA *looks at* BLONDO'S *head disgusted.* BLONDO *stamps bee.*]

HANDY: Did he bite you, Mister? I'll git be turp'ntine.

BLONDO: Get me my hat! Rebecca, excuse me.

REBECCA: Richard, I did not know you were masquerading under a wig. I could never marry a man with a bald head. [*Hands him the ring.* HANDY *hands* BLONDO *his hat and exits L as* BLONDO *exits R.*]

REBECCA [*cries a little*]: O well, it's lucky I found out in time. He is not the *only* string on my bow. Richo will be on his knees when I tell him a few things.

CURTAIN

## ACT III.

### SCENE

Front porch, next A. M., REBECCA and JANIE seated. JANIE still knitting.

REBECCA: Of course, Janie, you will have to knit the two thousand rows. I am afraid you carry your jokes a little too far. Kate will never forgive you. While I am glad I discovered Mr. Blondo's baldness, it was rude in you to put the bee in his wig.

JANIE: Cupid has to have a *hard* blow sometimes, mother.

REBECCA: Will you be surprised to know that Mr. Richo has been a frequent visitor to Maple Shade recently?

JANIE: Oh, I hope he and Aunt Kate will make up at last.

REBECCA: Child, that can never be. Mr. Richo has been on his knees to your mother.

JANIE: O mother, he's too old for you.

REBECCA: Years don't count, Janie; it's the spirit of him that I admire. You would like Mr. Richo for he is a man without a fault. Then, too, he is very wealthy and since Aunt Kate is going to cut you off without a penny, well—er—you will not fear for the future.

JANIE: Mother, I hope you have not made any promises to Mr. Richo.

REBECCA: Well, I may as well tell you that I wrote him last night that I had reconsidered his offer of marriage.

JANIE: Well, I don't want Aunt Kate's money, or Mr Richo's either. I want my own father.

REBECCA: That is a noble thought, Janie, but ten years in the Arctic region with no word from him is proof that he sleeps beneath the snow.

RICHO [*R*]: Good morning, ladies. [*Ladies shake hands.*]

REBECCA: We were just speaking of you, Mr. Richo. So glad you have come. [*Places chair for him.*]

RICHO [*to* REBECCA]: The morning is so lovely I thought you would like a spin to my mountain farm.

REBECCA: Perfectly charming, Mr. Richo. You always plan such delightful trips for me. Janie, get my hat and gloves, please. [*Exit* JANIE *R.*]

RICHO: Rebecca, it was so sweet of you to reconsider. You will make me the happiest man if you will be mine.

REBECCA: All is yours, Robert. [*Enter* JANIE *with hat.*] Thank you, Janie love, tell Handy to hoe the sweet peas while I am away. I want them to bloom by June. [REBECCA *and* RICHO *go out R.*]

JANIE: Sweet peas for a wedding, I guess! [*Stamps foot.*] Handy, come here. Now is a good time to open the eyes of Cupid in your case.

HANDY: Yassy mum, but I ain't got done laughin' ober de Blondo Bee yit. Ain't it a good thing de Lord gib de bee a stinger and you a hatful of sense?

JANIE: Where are Aunt Kate and Mandy?

HANDY: Miss Kitty, she rubbin' ile on Tompson, and Mandy's scrubbin'.

JANIE: Well you know what you have to do in this make-up. Seat, sir! [*Exit L.*] Mandy, Mandy, come here a minute.

MANDY [*L*]: Here I is, Miss Janie.

JANIE: Get some water and wipe the window and porch floor, Mandy. Bring the step ladder so you can get the cobwebs down, too. We are going to have company, I think.

MANDY: Who comin', Miss Janie?

JANIE: Mr. Richo took mother for a drive.

MANDY: You don' say so! Spec ter my soul we hab a weddin' after all.

JANIE: What, you and your new man going to marry soon?

MANDY: Yes'm, guess de weddin' bells ring 'fo' long. [*Exit to get water, etc.*]

MISS KATE [*with* TOMPSON]: What, you unattended! I thought your mother was with you.

JANIE: Aunt Kate, mother has gone riding with your old beau. What would you give me to break up the match and give him to you?

MISS KATE: I'll give you another thousand rows if you mention the alligator man to me again.

JANIE [*aside*]: How can I get her out of the way? Aunt Kate, if you'd get a black wig, pink your cheeks a little, make up a rosebud mouth, put on a low-neck georgette, and a sweet smile, you could bring the alligator man to his senses and his knees, declaring you to be still the sweetest girl in Dixie. [MANDY *enters with ladder, water, etc., and washes window.*]

MISS KATE: Janie Wing, hush. My mind is not on MAN, it's on poor, suffering *Cats* [*stroking* TOMPSON].

JANIE: And then you'd say, Robert, do you really think so? And he'd say, yes, dearie, I've been blind as a bat these years not to give up the alligator ranch for you. Then you'd surrender and he'd kiss you.

MISS KATE: This is more than I can endure. I leave you with another thousand rows. [*Enter* HANDY *dressed as a woman, bonnet on.*]

HANDY: Morning, Missis, needing any service?

JANIE: Good morning, what is your name, and where do you come from?

HANDY: Sally Hants, from down on de PEEDEE, out fer service.

JANIE: Well, Sally, I may need help soon.

SALLY: Dis gal gwine leab you, am she?

JANIE: She tells me she expects to marry soon and of course I shan't keep her from it.

SALLY: No'm, not 'tall; if she gwine git a good man she better not let him slip. I knowed a gal one't dat had a good chance and she give him up fer a chap from nowhar. I tell you marryin' *import* ain't like marryin' *export* raised under yo' own eyes.

JANIE: Well, Sally, can you cook, and clean up, and milk?

SALLY: Yas'm, I kin cook. Cook an' clean up. [*Grabs rag and scrubs.*] Cook an' milk butter, cook an' run car, cook an' hitch hoss, cook an' slap bootleg in de face wid dish-rag, an—

MANDY: Whar you larn all dat smartuality?

SALLY: Down whar de fo' leaf clovers grow!

JANIE: Well, Sally, I will hire you since Mandy is going to leave me.

MANDY: Hush, Miss Janie, dar hain't no tellin' when dat coon gwine call fer me. He doin' some tall co'tin' but dat don't mean I gwine take him. Miss Sally, dar, done gimme idee 'bout dese here impo'ts an' I sorte thunk dis one's a bootleg, fer every time he come see me he say, "Recken dat colored butler buy a little moonshine?"

SALLY: Whut you say ter dat?

MANDY: I say, "Don't you say moonshine ter him if you don't want de black skeered outen you!"

SALLY: Looks like you'd be settin' yo' cap fer de butler 'stid de bootleg. Bootleg ain't nobody dese days.

MANDY: Dat's de plum truf, Miss Sally. Spec I better make up wid de butler.

SALLY: Alrighty, Miss Mandy [*pulling off dress*]. I des kiss you fer dat. [*Tries to kiss her, but she runs up step ladder with tea-kettle and pours water on him when he starts up.*]

MANDY: No, you won't take no kiss, but you kin take dat. [*Throws rag at him.*]

MISS KATE [*R*]: Stop this barbarism immediately. One would think the Goths and Vandals had come to life. I have a crow to pick with you ALL. [*All fold hands and sigh.*]

MISS KATE: I have thought deeply about this tragic affair of Tompson's yesterday and have concluded that the whole trouble was a premeditated plot upon the life of my one and only pet. You will answer my questions with a yes or a no. First, Janie, while sitting on the porch yesterday, did you make signs to Handy to get you off the porch?

JANIE: I did.

MISS KATE: Mandy, did you throw boiling water on Tompson to get him out of the kitchen?

MANDY: I did, mum. Allus on my table.

MISS KATE: Handy, didn't you see the poor cat running from the kitchen, grab him and pitch him in the well to get Jane off the porch?

HANDY: I did, yer honor. Weep crickets! de hour ob tribulation am here!

MISS KATE: Yes, it's here. I wrote my will leaving each of you one hundred dollars for helping me rescue the poor creature, but since I've studied out the plot you played against me and mine, I leave you nothing but dislike, distrust and dishonor. [*Exit R haughtily.*]

HANDY: Spec we better try dis-remember dis 'casion. [*Plays harp or other instrument if he can.* HANDY *and* MANDY *dance or cake-walk.*]

HANDY: Miss Janie, here's nudder fedder fer yo' cap Me and Mandy are peaches and cream now.

JANIE: And forever I trust. Handy, mother wants you to hoe the sweet-peas and Mandy, you had better put on the kettle. [HANDY *and* MANDY *exeunt L.*]

*Enter* SILAS MEND.

SILAS MEND [*R*]: Morning, Miss. Got any chairs to mend today?

JANIE: Good morning, sir. Come in and be seated. Yes, I have an old, old chair that my great, great, great, grandmother had. She was such a wonderful woman,

that I think I'll grow to be a smart woman if I sit in her chair and rock and think. I'll get it out of the attic.

SILAS [*wiping sweat from brow and fanning with hat*]: Smart girl, now. Wonder where her mother is.

HANDY [*L with hoe*]: Howdy, Mister. Ain't bootleggin', air you? Got on awful high boots.

SILAS: No, I'm a mender of chairs.

HANDY: Goody, I'm a mender, too,—mender of de glorious 18th.

SILAS: Why, what have you done?

HANDY: Jist now beat a bootleg outen his gal.

SILAS: You are sort of police here, are you?

HANDY: Yassuh, perlices de farm fer Miss Wing, hoes de co'n, digs de taters and acts de butler when de beaus come.

SILAS: Is the lady of the house a widow?

HANDY: Well, no, er, yessuh, I recken she widow. Hubby went off and never come back and she thunk he dead. She was 'bout marry but me and Miss Janie, and a bee, we busted—Hello, here come somebody. Come on ole clog-splitter. [*Grabs hoe and runs out L.*]

JANIE [*with chair*]: Now sir, I wish you to make this chair a thing of beauty, for it's to be a joy to me.

SILAS: I'll do my best for you, Miss Wing. It will need to be scraped, sand-papered, and varnished. Silas Mend is my name. Where may I work?

JANIE: Right here, so I can make suggestions about the chair. You see I'm a prisoner, serving a sentence of three thousand rows of knitting and can't leave the porch.

SILAS [*looking around*]: Looks like you are a "trusty"—no guards.

JANIE: Mother has gone riding and Aunt Kate became so disgusted with me she beat a retreat, when I asked here if she wished me to help her make up with her old beau.

SILAS: You seem to be helping Cupid a bit.

JANIE: Someone ought to assist the poor, eyeless creature. Mr. Mend, within the last hour I have made a match, but now I'm stumped.

SILAS: What er—er—ah—is the trouble?

JANIE: Well in algebraeic terms I call it eliminating the second quantity of another example or a father-in-law to-be.

SILAS: Do I infer that you have eliminated the first quantity?

JANIE: Yes, that was easily done, but the second is such a nice, good man I can't find a flaw for a plot.

SILAS: Why do you object to a good daddy-man?

JANIE [*rising*]: Because, sir, I believe my father is living. He went to Alaska ten years ago and I've never heard that he was dead.

HANDY [*L*]: Here's a letter ole Blondo gimme dollar ter brung you, Miss Janie, on de sly. Tole him spec you'd tear it up.

JANIE: I'll read it in the open.

Dearest, sweet Janie:

After getting my wits together since yesterday I've decided the bee did the right thing. Cupid had me blinded 'till said bee opened my eyes to the charms of, not your mother, but you, you, *you*. The way you have swung my heart to you is like the way you swing a ball through a wicket, and a car around a curve. I'm sure you were pleased with the prospect of me for a father, couldn't I wear a wig and make you a pretty nice hubby? [*Stamps*

*foot.*] We'd elope to Alaska and hunt a spell for daddy. Say you will fly with me, little bird. [*Aside.*] The old fool! Marry me and you will not have to knit for a sour old maid.

JANIE: If that isn't the *limit!* [*Tears letter.*] Get behind me Satan.

HANDY: Ain't you gwine answer, Miss Janie? He gimme five dollars ter bring him nice answer.

JANIE: Not if he'd give you five billion dollars. You had better watch Blondo, Handy. The devil will possess him after this. [HANDY *exits at L.*]

SILAS: You surely gave Cupid a black eye that time, Miss Wing.

JANIE: I wish the next case were as easy.

SILAS: If I knew a little more about the case I might ferret out a way to help you.

JANIE: Goody! I dub you First Lieutenant to Captain Cupid. Mother almost told me she meant to marry this nice Mr. Richo. She will be back before long and if I get any more information as to their plans I will inform you.

MISS KATE: Of all things, idle again. [*Counts rows.*] No headway at all. Why is this plebeian performance on the front porch?

JANIE: Auntie, this gentleman is rejuvenating our greatest ancestor's chair. It will be used only on special occasions, for instance when your lover comes.

MISS KATE: Will you please keep silence about my lover. He was properly discarded with his alligators.

MISS KATE: Sir, take your rubbish to the back porch immediately. [*Exit* SILAS *with tools.*]

MISS KATE: I will be only too glad when a masculine arm comes to this household to release me. I won't be responsible for your mixing with all sorts. You are perfectly at home with the servants and a day laborer.

MANDY: Oh, Miss Kate, come quick. Tompson's caught nudder chicken.

MISS KATE: Oh, I fear I'll have to muzzle the poor fellow. [*Exit L.*]

JANIE: Better let me shoot him, Aunt Kate. [*Enter* REBECCA *and* RICHO *R.*]

RICHO: Shoot him! Me, Janie? I hope my little daughter-to-be will not do that!

JANIE: Oh, no, I meant the cat that caught the chicken

REBECCA: Come, sit with us, Janie. We have a secret to tell you.

JANIE: When is the wedding to be, mother?

REBECCA: Day after tomorrow, dear.

RICHO: Yes, girlie, I have to go to Florida to see about the alligator farm and from there to South America right away, and I wish my wife and daughter to accompany me.

JANIE: But what will become of Aunt Kate?

MISS KATE [*with cat muzzled*]: Gracious, mercy, excuse me! I thought Janie was alone. I believe it is too cool for me to sit in the breeze. [*Exit.*]

REBECCA: Well, we haven't thought of that, Robert. Come, let's hunt up Aunt Kate and make plans with her.

JANIE: Oh, mother, see if she won't go on a visit to Mrs. Sara Pines. [REBECCA *and* RICHO *exeunt R.*]

JANIE: Oh, what *can* I do! This work of Cupid is too much for me. I'll report to the First Lieutenant. If he fails me, then I'll let King Cupid go it blind!

CURTAIN

## ACT IV.

### SCENE

Same porch, decorated for wedding. piano if possible, chairs for three, flowers. Make as elaborate as desired. Use wedding march if possible. More guests may come in.

JANIE [*arranging flowers*]: I'm working by faith now and not by sight. Here I am trying to break up a wedding and at the same time working for it. The chair-mender didn't give me much satisfaction. Well, I did all I could. Time will tell what he will do.

HANDY [*L*]: Miss Janie, been lookin' fer you all mornin'. Got some big news.

JANIE: What is it, Handy?

HANDY: Early dis mornin' I meets dat ole Blondo and says he, mad as snake, "Why didn't you bring me answer ter dat letter I sont to my girl?" I tell him you sed dar ain't gwine be no answer, tore up yo letter, and say, "Git behind me, Satan," and man! he paw de groun' and say he b'lieve I'se lyin'. I make a fist ter zip him but he move on sayin', "I knows a feller dat'll settle wid you fer dis, as well as some other matters." And den he turn his engine wide open and tried ter drown me wid dust. 'Bout de time I git ter de pine woods drivin' de cattle—

JANIE: Pine woods driving the cattle, Handy?

HANDY: No'm, me drivin' de cattle at de pine woods, dat nigger dat been co'tin' Mandy jump on me. Miss Janie, you oughter been dar. Dar ain't been no wusser fight since York killed de Germans, fust *me* up, den *him;* ole dog Tige, he jumped on ter bite fer me, and de male cow, he smelt blood and bellowed and paw de dirt. Pretty soon I win de big Victry, fling him, set on him, and made him open his mouf.

JANIE: Goody! What did he tell you, Handy?

HANDY: I say, "Whut you doin' in dis country anyway?" He low, "I'se makin' liquor fer a gentleman." I vip him on de jowl and tell him tain't so fer no *gentleman'd* sneak round an' make dat stuff. "Dat all you doin' in dese diggins?" says I. "No surree, I co'tin' pretty gal named Mandy," he say, "gwine marry right 'fo yo' eyes too!" "Tain't so," sed I, and I wallops him ober in de road. Den he say, "Mr. Heap, if you let me loose, I'll give you big dram liquor." Dat make me mad nuff ter make me thunk and I say, "Dat jis makes me ax you who is de feller you makin' liquor fer." He won't open his mouf till I choke him den says he, "Hits Mr. Blondo. He pays me good money ter moonshine fer him." Den I whacks him on de coeoanut and tell him ter git up and go with me ter de sheriff.

JANIE: Hurrah for you, Handy. You are a useful citizen. I was sure this chap was a bootlegger the night I saw him in the kitchen. Did you report Blondo to the sheriff?

HANDY: Co'se. I spee de sheriff chasin' him now.

MANDY: Yo' ma wants you, Miss Janie. [*Exit* JANIE *R.*]

HANDY: Mandy, is you ready fer our weddin'?

MANDY: Ain't had much time fer fixin' mysef, Handy. Ben awful busy dis A. M.

HANDY: You is lookin' awful purty ter me. Wharbouts is we gwine stan?

MANDY: Right in de white fo'ks tracks atter dey is married. Yo' tie is ontied, Handy Boy. [*Ties it.*]

HANDY: I so out er breath atter my big fight dis mornin' had ter leab de tie ontied fer breaf. Got nice gal ter fix it fer me. [*Pats her cheek.*]

MANDY: Handy, I reeken Miss Beeky and Mr. Richo got lots confidence in me and you ter let us look atter de farm while dey gone.

HANDY: I'se glad Miss Kate gwine on visit ter Miss Pines. She too bossy fer me.

MANDY: Law, coon, hits mos' time fer de weddin'. I hear de preacher comin'. [MANDY *and* HANDY *stand at L. Preacher enters R or C and takes stand near CF.* MISS KATE *and* MRS. PINES, *followed by* JANIE *come in and sit at R. Bride and Groom enter and stand in C facing audience. Music if desired.*]

MINISTER: Dearly beloved, we are here for the purpose of uniting this man and woman in the bonds of matrimony. If anyone objects let him speak or—

SILAS [*well dressed advances from R*]: Sir, I have the first claim upon this lady as I married her sixteen years ago. I have been lost in the Arctic land.

JANIE: O father, father, I knew you'd come back. [*Hugs him.*] Do tell us all.

SILAS: My dear little Janie, I will. Soon after landing I was taken far inland by some seemingly friendly Indians who held me for a large ransom. I had no way of extricating myself except by digging a few ounces of gold daily all these years and turning it over to my captors. I do not blame you, Rebecca, for the step you have taken.

JANIE: Oh, father, I believe you are the chair-mender.

MISS KATE: O John, is it possible that I ordered you off your own front porch?

JANIE: Yes, Kate, you ordered your brother off his own porch. [*Smiles.*]

RICHO: Here, John, old boy, come take your place by this old sweetheart of yours. [*Leads him up.*]

REBECCA: O John, dear, I'm glad you came in time. [*Takes his hand.*]

MINISTER: I pronounce you man and wife.

HANDY: I seconds de motion!

MANDY: I motion de second!

JANIE: Isn't it all just grand except for poor Mr. Richo. [*Goes to him.*]

RICHO: Right you are, Janie. It will be tragic for me unless [*whispers*] you persuade Aunt Kate to forgive and forget.

JANIE: Aunt Kate, Cupid has been in mourning for you and Mr. Richo, lo these twenty years. The little blind chap wishes to laugh and dance at your wedding today. Mr. Richo has sold his alligator ranch and he is dying for a sweet smile from you.

MISS KATE: Well, as poor Tompson is dead and buried I recken I might as well smile. If only I had on a wedding garment.

JANIE: O you look as sweet as a peach now. Mother, let Aunt Kate wear your orange blossoms.

REBECCA: Certainly, dear. [*Places them on* MISS KATE. REBECCA *leads* RICHO *and* JOHN *leads* MISS KATE *into place before the minister.*]

MANDY: Hurrah, fer dis weddin'!

HANDY: Hurrah, fer Miss Janie who done de breakin' and de makin'!

JANIE: Yes, but with all the breaking and the making she has just played first aid to Cupid.

CURTAIN

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